1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

include, fish, goat, chicken, hare, mutton, buck, and even pork. Apparently carrion is never eaten. The flesh of the deer may be eaten but not that of the tiger. The villager is an adept at preparing vegetables for his curries, and throughout the year depends largely upon the following according to the seasons: *sags* of various kinds; egg plants; pumpkins and gourds; okra; potatoes, both ordinary and sweet; onions; roots of various plants; and corn on the cob roasted until it is brown.

The community feast, or feasts, given to a relatively large group on special occasions, are things which help to break the monotony of diet. Community feasts are usually paid for out of the proceeds of fines levied by the *panch*. An individual also may give a feast as a thank-offering, or at child-birth, at the time of a wedding, or at death. One of the favourite foods is said to be a preparation described below known as *bara*, and is served at every feast. If some social event should make a feast obligatory, and if the person concerned should fail to provide the expected meal, the *panch* brings pressure upon him to do so. If he still fails, the person is boycotted for a period. The usual menu at such a feast includes rice and *chapatis*, pulse, vegetable curry, *chatni*, *bara* and if they can be afforded, meats of various kinds. Kols drink milk when it is available and apparently do not feel that all milk should be kept for the calf, as some Munda tribes believe. Milk is also used in the preparation of certain special foods, such as *khir*, which is used for the child's first feeding. See below.

Foods are usually divided into two classes: *pakka* and *kachha*. The former kind is cooked in *ghi* or *ghi* is used in its preparation, and the latter is simply cooked with water. *Ghi*, like other products from the sacred cow, protects from impurity. While caste Hindus have numerous restrictions in connection with this classification, the Kols do not seem to be particular in this regard. They will take food cooked by "clean" Hindu castes, but never from those castes which they consider below them, such as Chamars, Mahars, Dhobis, Basors, and Doms. Nowhere Kols seemed to be starved nor emaciated. Apparently, they have enough to keep them in fairly good health, though not in abundance. We did not find stout people among them.

The main food-stuffs are listed below. In an average Kol house all of these are probably not found at any one time, but they are those used when available:

Grains: Wheat, rice, millet (in northern areas).

Pulses: Black pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*). Red and yellow types (*Cajanus indicus* and *Dolichos lablab*).

Oils: Mustard oil usually from *Guisotia abyssinica*. Sweet oil or

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on the *til* salt and some spices are usually added. The dough is then moulded by hand into cakes of various sizes which are fried in sweet (*til*) oil or in clarified butter. *Bara* is usually eaten in this form though occasionally, if curd is available, it is soaked in that until soft. 252

Dahi is a form of sour milk, though a particular strain of bacteria seems to be required. A bit of old *dahi* is put into the new milk which has been sweetened and to which possibly a little sliced green chili has been added. This is set aside until the *dahi* is formed.

Khir. This is made by boiling rice in milk over a slow fire. Sugar is added to sweeten. When the mixture becomes creamy, chopped cocoanut, pistachio, and *ilachi* seeds are added to taste.

Batasa. Sugar is boiled with water until there is a very thick syrup. This is poured into a cocoanut shell which has a small hole in the bottom through which the syrup may drip. This is allowed to drip on cloth or paper forming small balls of various sizes. The product turns out to be a small whitish ball, spongy and very sweet.

FOOD TABOOS. There are certain things which Kols never eat. The use of beef and carrion is universally tabooed. The latter is eaten only by outcastes, and beef is not taken in deference to their Hindu neighbours. It was noted that pork is among the foods used. In Hinduized centres it is no longer eaten as a regular dish, but it is still partaken of at festival times when a young pig may be offered to the goddess and ceremonially eaten. Nothing that creeps on the ground should be eaten. 262 [564] [178 782]

Among other animals which they never kill nor eat are found the names of the parrot, sparrow, crow, kite and *galgal* (*Acridotheres tristis*).

INTOXICANTS. There is evidence to show that the Kols are not so addicted to the use of intoxicants as they were in previous years. At times of religious ceremonies liquor is still used quite freely and no penalty is attached. In one centre we were informed that the *panchayat* fines any man who is caught drinking liquor, and that they had totally abolished its use in that village. In other places they were not so successful, and yet there was a standard penalty of Rs. 10 or a community feast, when, in the judgment of the *panch* the circumstances warranted it. 273 [184 623 681]

Contact with city life seems to increase the use of liquor; and Kol dwellers in Jubbulpore have distinctly less feeling against it and more often indulge in its use than do the people living in the village. [369]

As far as we could learn there was no record of the Kols resorting to the illicit distillation of intoxicants. When they need liquor for their [443]

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4. Divorce and the care of the children.
5. Failure to provide adequately for members of the household.
6. Debt, drink, betting and quarrels.
7. Injury to, or the killing of animals which are considered sacred.
8. Defying the Kol social traditions, not listed above.
9. Deciding upon contributions of money or supplies for group religious observances.
10. Property and inheritance when there is a dispute or doubt.

Should the decision of the *panch* not be accepted in some serious dispute, particularly where real property is involved, the matter may be taken to the civil courts. While this method is open and often threatened, it is seldom resorted to. Kols are not often found in the courts, for there is always the chance that they will lose the case and also have to face social boycott of the *panch* for not heeding its decision and advice. In some matters the *panch* itself may advise going to court. If there is a grave offense, such as murder or theft, the police step in and the matter is taken entirely out of the hands of the community. Nevertheless the Kols boast that they are law abiding and that most sections of them have had no police record whatsoever. Enquiry from the police confirmed this claim; in this respect Kols give no anxiety and the police seldom trouble them when some crime has been committed in the larger villages of which Kols form a part.

When a penalty is decided upon the *panch* sees that it is enforced. If the person to be disciplined is amenable to the *panch* the penalty is usually either a fine or a feast. If the latter, the person must feed the leaders of the community and thus express regret for his act; or if a fine is imposed, such, if realized, is usually used for a feast. In the past it is said that the fines were used for the purchase of alcoholic liquors and drinks, and in some places still are; but now-a-days this seems to be largely abandoned. The fine in some cases might even amount to fifty rupees, but for a Kol this is an excessive amount and it is unlikely that so much is ever declared under ordinary circumstances. Five rupees or so is the usual amount for ordinary violations.

INTER-VILLAGE COUNCILS. The general social solidarity of the Kols is further shown by the fact that under the more stable conditions of village life, no single village stands alone in making an important decision affecting one of its members, for there are inter-village federations. Sarat Chandra Roy also reports this among the Kharias.[1] In several

1 *The Kharias*, p. 172.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

513 823 Kols generally say that they, unlike the Hindus, are not particular about the direction of their head when they sleep. Inside their own houses they can make their couch in any direction. When they sleep outside, however, they should lie with their heads to the east. And yet, further questionings have revealed, that most Kols have a definite prejudice against sleeping with the head to the north, whether inside or outside the house. No doubt this is because the [764] dead are placed in that position.

231 825 [673] [681] [627 574] ANIMALS AND TREES. *Animals.* Among the Kols there is an exaggerated respect for the cow and it is said that she is the most sacred of all animals. To kill a cow is to commit a great sin, much worse even than killing a Brahmin. In the strictest sense it is murder, and anyone killing a cow even accidentally should make a pilgrimage to the Ganges and offer a gift to the river. On his return he is required to give a feast to the community. Kols as a rule are not rich in cattle and those they possess are a poor lot.

825 The palm squirrel (*Sciurus palmarum*), is very commonly found in the villages and frequents the houses of people. Kols have a great respect for this creature and some would even rank it above the cow, for, one said, to kill such an animal was as bad as killing a hundred [773] Brahmins! Popular legend has it that when Rama was building his bridge from India to Ceylon in order to rescue Sita, these squirrels helped him by bringing dust on their tails. Rama was pleased with this act of devotion and stroked the backs of the squirrels and to this [627 574] day the marks of his hands can be seen in the black strips on their backs. Any one who happens to kill a squirrel should give a feast. Boys will never shoot nor molest them.

231 825 The cat is likewise revered by Kols and is usually called *mai*, mother. In the ordinary sense Kols do not keep nor care for cats; they are just a part of the village and roam it freely in search of food while no one claims particular ownership. Sometimes they multiply to an alarming extent and in one village it was discovered that no chickens could be raised due to the presence of the cats who killed and ate the younger chickens. No effort was made to change this condi- [183] tion nor rid the village of the cats. That would be a breach of custom.

[783] The dogs too are the general property of the village. To Indian villagers the dog is often an impure animal, but this is not true in the case of the Kols, for the touch of the dog is not defiling. He is a village watchman, and in a sense a custodian of their safety, as he gives the village warning should strangers approach. To slay him is to slay